

VZCZCXRO3842
RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ
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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0877
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3815
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1633
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1500
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2069
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2555

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000671

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN CONTINUES TO SHUCK VESTIGES OF NIYAZOV'S
CULT

11. (U) In response to April 23 instructions from President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Turkmenistan's Mejlis (Parliament) on May 24 adopted a resolution that returns the names of the months of the year to their Russian (international) names and the names of the days of the week to their traditional Turkmen names. The resolution will take effect on July 1, and reverses an August 2002 decision by former President Niyazov to replace the months' and days' Gregorian calendar names with unique Niyazovian names -- January was named for Niyazov, April for his mother, and September after his book, the Ruhnama. The Mejlis resolution cited the need to adhere to global standards, including the use of the Gregorian calendar names, as the reason for the change. Post lately has observed another sign that President Niyazov's personality cult is slowly being walked back: a book exhibit at a May 23-25 international carpet exhibition in Ashgabat did not display a single copy of any of Niyazov's books, including the Ruhnama.

12. (SBU) COMMENT: In general, Turkmenistan's people seem to be happy about the decision to reinstate the Gregorian calendar and return to the traditional names of the days of the week. For most Turkmen, who were raised using the Gregorian calendar and who tend to be apolitical, abolishing Niyazov's calendar is not so much a political statement as it is a return to sanity and normality. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND